AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An image pickup apparatus provided with a solid state image pickup device and a data compression means for compressing a video signal acquired by said solid state image pickup device, characterized in that said image pickup apparatus comprises:

a characteristic value calculation means for extracting a characteristic value used for predicting an amount of codes to be generated at a time of compressing a video signal acquired by said solid state image pickup device from the video signal; and

a compression coefficient control means for controlling a compression coefficient which is used by said data compression means based on the characteristic value acquired by said characteristic value calculation means, said compression coefficient control means using the characteristic value acquired by said characteristic value calculation means at a time of allowing users to check an image to be picked-up before picking up the image, and determining the compression coefficient at a time of picking up an image,

wherein the compression coefficient control means is arranged to correct an error included in the characteristic value caused by a change in operation mode in the image pickup apparatus from a mode in which a user is allowed to check an image to be picked-up to another mode in which an image is picked up by use of a correction coefficient calculated in advance based on a result of measurement of a change in characteristic value at a time of change of an operation mode.

2. (Previously Presented) The image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that said characteristic value calculation means divides the picked-up image into two or more areas, calculates a characteristic value for each of the two or more areas in addition to the characteristic value

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acquired from the whole of the picked-up image, and outputs the largest one of the characteristic values acquired for the two or more areas, as a local maximum characteristic value, and said compression coefficient control means controls the compression coefficient which is used by said data compression means based on the two characteristic values acquired by said characteristic value calculation means.

3. (Previously Presented) The image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that said characteristic value calculation means stores characteristic values acquired for two or more frames, and makes a correction to a characteristic value which said characteristic value calculation means will output according to a change in the characteristic values acquired for the two or more frames.

4. (Previously Presented) The image pickup apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that said compression coefficient control means rewrites information about on a list of data or coefficients using data transmitted thereto by using communications with external equipment.

5. (Currently Amended) An image pickup method of picking up an image using a solid state image pickup device, and performing image compression processing on the picked-up image, and recording the compressed image in a recording medium, characterized in that said method comprising:

a characteristic value calculation step for extracting a characteristic value used for predicting an amount of codes to be generated at a time of compressing a video signal acquired by said solid state image pickup device from the video signal;

a compression coefficient control step for controlling a compression coefficient which is used for data compression based on the characteristic

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value acquired in said characteristic value calculation step; and

a data compression step for compressing the video signal acquired by said solid state image pickup device using the compression coefficient acquired in said compression coefficient control step, said compression coefficient control step including steps of using the characteristic value acquired by said characteristic value calculation means at a time of allowing users to check an image to be picked-up before picking up the image, and determining the compression coefficient at a time of picking up an image, and

said characteristic value calculation step comprises an error correction step, the error being included in the characteristic value and being caused by a change in operation mode from a mode in which a user is allowed to check an image to be picked-up to a mode in which the image is picked up, the error correction step including:

referring to a characteristic value correction coefficient calculated in advance based on a

result of measurement of a change in characteristic value at a time of change of an operation mode.

6. (New) The image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a characteristic value correction table containing correction coefficients calculated in advance based on results of a measurement of a change in characteristic value at a time of change of an operation mode, the characteristic value correction coefficient table including all possible combinations of one out of all the operation modes at the time of allowing a user to check an image to be picked-up, and one out of all the operation modes at the time of picking up of the image.

7. (New) The image pickup apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the compression coefficient control means is arranged to refer to a specific

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correction coefficient of the characteristic value correction coefficient table according to the specific change in operation mode and to multiply the characteristic value by the specific correction coefficient.

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